



## Bolton Impact Trust

# Teaching and Learning Policy

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## Our Aims

At Bolton Impact Trust we believe that Learning is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours that are retained long-term and can be applied to a range of contexts.

Providing high-quality Teaching and Learning to all of our pupils is central to our Trust's beliefs and values:

**We believe everyone can achieve.**

**We inspire a love of learning**

**We transform potential into long-lasting success.**

We aim to:

- Ensure that everyone in the Trust is committed to delivering consistent high-quality Teaching and Learning to all of our pupils
- Motivate and inspire our pupils to develop a lifelong love of learning
- Create learning environments that are innovative, motivational and impactful on children's lives
- Offer every pupil a learning package that is personalised and relevant to them, addressing their individual needs and supporting them to make the next steps on their learning journey
- Transform potential into long-lasting success

## Our guiding principles

Research tells us that pupils learn most effectively when:

- › Teachers are trauma-informed in their approach and create anxiety-free classrooms where pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- › They can manage their emotions and have the resilience to make mistakes and persevere.
- › They are engaged and encouraged to think hard about something.
- › Teachers structure pupils' learning so that they build upon and connect knowledge to what they already know.
- › Teachers deliver new material in manageable amounts at the right level for each child
- › Teachers model and share what success looks like.
- › Teachers regularly check for understanding and promptly address misconceptions.
- › Teachers create opportunities for pupils to regularly practise and retrieve what they have learned.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leaders in the Trust Central Team will:

- Have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, personalised education to all
- Hold all leaders and staff to account for high quality teaching and learning
- Ensure that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the Trust's approach to teaching and learning
- Provide opportunities for staff to work collaboratively across the Trust to develop their practice
- Share next and best practice with leaders and teachers in the Trust via hubs and the Teaching and Learning Newsletter

Senior Leaders in each academy will:

- Promote the Trust's clear and ambitious vision for high-quality, inclusive education to all
- Celebrate achievement and have high expectations for everyone
- Hold staff and pupils to account for their teaching and learning
- Plan and evaluate strategies to secure high-quality teaching and learning in their academies
- Manage resources to support high-quality teaching and learning
- Provide support and guidance to other staff through coaching and mentoring
- Actively promote engagement with all of the CPD opportunities provided by the Trust to improve staff's practice and subject knowledge and monitor the impact of all continuing professional development.
- Promote team working at all levels, for example by buddying teachers up to support one another where appropriate
- Address underachievement and intervene promptly

Subject Leads across the Trust will:

- Help to create well-sequenced, broad and balanced curriculum plans that build knowledge and skills
- Sequence lessons in a way that allows pupils to make good progress from their starting points
- Use their budget effectively to resource their subject, providing teachers with necessary resources for learning
- Drive improvement in their subject/phase, working with teachers to identify any challenges
- Timetable their subject to allocate time for pupils to:
  - Achieve breadth and depth
  - Fully understand the topic
  - Demonstrate excellence
- Moderate progress across their subject/phase by, for example, systematically reviewing progress against a range of evidence and reviewing qualitative and quantitative performance data
- Improve on weaknesses identified in their monitoring activities

- Create and share clear intentions for their subject/phase
- Encourage teachers to share ideas, resources and good practice

Teachers across the Trust will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Teacher' Standards
- Provide high-quality, well-planned and structured lessons
- Ensure that they adopt a trauma-informed approach to teaching
- Ensure that their classroom environment is an anxiety free, safe and secure place where all pupils feel valued
- Ensure that their learning environment is safe, clean and welcoming and includes displays which promote high quality teaching and learning
- Ensure that they have high expectations of all pupils
- Ensure that work is challenging and engaging
- Structure pupils' learning so that they build upon and connect knowledge to what they already know
- Deliver new material in manageable amounts and at the right level for each child
- Model and share what success looks like
- Regularly check for understanding and promptly address misconceptions
- Create opportunities for pupils to regularly practise and retrieve what they have learned
- Engage with CPD opportunities offered by the Trust

Learning mentors and Support Staff across the Trust will:

- Follow the expectations for teaching and professional conduct as set out in the Trust's Learning Mentor Standards
- Know pupils well and differentiate support to meet their individual learning needs
- Support teaching and learning with flexibility and resourcefulness
- Use agreed assessment for learning strategies
- Engage in providing inspiring lessons and learning opportunities
- Feedback observations of pupils to teachers
- Ask questions to make sure they've understood expectations for learning
- Identify and use resources to support learning
- Have high expectations and celebrate achievement
- Demonstrate and model themselves as learners
- Engage with CPD opportunities offered by the Trust
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Governors and Trustees across the Trust will:

- Monitor that resources and funding are allocated effectively to support the school's approach to teaching and learning
- Monitor the impact of teaching and learning strategies on pupils' progress and attainment
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold senior leaders to account for its implementation
- Make sure other school policies promote high-quality teaching, and that these are being implemented

## Learning environment

Across the Trust we will ensure that the learning environments are kept safe, clean and ready for pupils to use them.

They will be arranged to promote learning through:

- Posters of material pupils have previously learned about and can identify
- Accessible resources for learning such as books, worksheets and other equipment
- A seating layout that allows everyone to see the board and participate
- Displays that celebrate and support pupils' learning

## Individual Academy Section To include:

### Personalisation of the curriculum

### Differentiation

### Marking and Feedback

### Assessment, recording and reporting

When a pupil arrives at any Academy within the Trust, they are baselined over a period of at least 6 weeks or one half term in order to accurately assess where they are in their academic journey. Information from schools, previous formal assessments and diagnostic testing are all used to provide a snapshot of every pupil's current levels in order to set appropriate work for them during the induction period. Baseline levels are agreed after a full half term in our settings and are made up of both summative and formative assessments. These baselines are then used to set targets based on the Trust's agreed expected progress flight paths for key academic end points based on National expectations. This process ensures that the data gathered and the targets set are accurate for all pupils.

The Trust gathers academic progress data termly in Reading, Writing and Maths for every child in every academy. The data provided is a teacher assessed grade based on both formative and summative assessment over the term.

(Secondary Only) The Trust has established grade descriptors for English and Maths across its provisions from Pre GCSE levels to Grade 9. This ensures that standards are consistent across the Trust and allows for Trust-wide moderation in both subjects. The grade descriptors are aligned with GCSE grades, Functional Skills levels and Pearson Steps. Progress is reported in these levels across the Trust. (Appendix 1)

## Moderation and Evaluation

## Trauma Informed Approach

### What is Trauma?

Gabor Mate states, “*Trauma is a psychic wound that hardens you psychologically that then interferes with your ability to grow and develop. It pains you and now you’re acting out of pain. It induces fear and now you’re acting out of fear*”.

A commonly held definition of trauma is anything that threatens a person’s life or harms a person emotionally or physically. Scientists are investigating the long-term effects of trauma on people physically, mentally, spiritually and socially and have found that if a child has multiple traumas or a significant trauma resulting in high ACE scores before the age of three or four, you will see developmental delays later in their childhood. These delays will often manifest themselves in the classroom.

### Early Impact of Trauma on the Brain

Research has shown that early relationships play a key role on how our brains grow and develop. Therefore, children who experience abuse and neglect early in childhood are at higher risk of experiencing long term effects. A brain that has adapted to survive in a threatening or an unpredictable world may not work so well in an ordinary environment and can put a person at greater risk of experiencing mental health problems in the future.

Some of the impacts of trauma on the brain include:

- struggling to fit in
- being misunderstood
- Inability to recognise positive social cues
- difficulty in trusting new people
- struggling to enjoy fun experiences by placing too much focus on the potential threat
- lack of confidence
- feeling anxious
- struggle to build and maintain relationships

When children in the classroom environment become stressed, their brain is saying “you’re in trouble and not safe and you need to do something about it”. Therefore we need to create environments that encourage children to function in the social engagement zone of the brain so they feel safe and are able to learn. Gabor Mate believes that, “*Safety is not the absence of threat it is the presence of connection*”. A trauma informed approach to your classroom can help achieve this.

# Trauma Informed Classrooms

## What is a trauma informed classroom?

Taking on board the research above it is important that we create safe environments for our pupils to learn in, as well as building strong professional relationships with them. The following section explains how we can develop a trauma informed environment to ensure pupils feel as safe as possible.

A trauma informed classrooms recognises:

- when a pupil acts out in class, misbehaves or simply won't do their work, their behaviour may have nothing to do with being "naughty". In fact, their behaviour may have nothing to do with the teacher or the classroom at all.
- pupils have gone through some severe events in their lives and are carrying memories of those events with them. Furthermore their brains are different because of this trauma.
- every time a child experiences a traumatic event, their body repeatedly produces a stress hormone that reduces the connections between neurons. This deficit happens precisely in the areas of the brain dedicated to reasoning and learning. Therefore when a child encounters an adverse situation, they physically cannot manage the reasoning to deal with it. In the classroom, an adverse situation could be something as simple as a spelling test.
- the need for teachers to identify this response and help the pupil find appropriate coping mechanisms.
- the need to focus on behaviour management by looking at the whole body health of each pupil and ensuring they feel safe so they are able to get into the social engagement mode of the brain so that learning can take place.

## Importance of the adult in the classroom

The major factor of a successful trauma informed classroom is the adults within the classroom. Teachers/mentors who take care of themselves mentally will influence their pupils enormously. Self-care is crucial if you are to support pupils who have experienced trauma.

Teachers who have a healthy self-care approach and take good care of themselves can then have the capacity to nurture pupils with kindness and empathy because their cup is full. They are able to focus on supporting the pupils, and to maintain a balanced and calm approach

This can be better understood with the metaphor, *'teachers need to put on their own oxygen mask first before assisting the pupil to put on their mask'*.

## How do I create a Trauma-informed classroom?

The adults must ensure pupils feel safe both emotionally and physically. The following approaches can help with this:

- Ensure pupils feel welcome:
  1. Meet and greet pupils at the door
  2. Use their names frequently
  3. Smile and use good eye contact
- Ensure pupils feel safe:
  1. Adopt a calm approach and tone of voice **Pupils sense teacher's anxiety, so calm teachers helps create safe spaces.**
  2. Be predictable, have clear regular routines in your classroom
- Build positive relationship:
  1. Invest time in getting to know pupils
  2. Speak regularly with parents
  3. Create an environment of mutual respect
- Create a relaxing environment:
  1. Where available, allow pupils to access a cool down/cosy area to calm down when required
  2. Use displays well. Use warm colours and do not over stimulate with too many fussy displays
  3. Dim lighting if appropriate
  4. Build the use of soothing music into lessons when appropriate
  5. Adopt flexible seating for pupils who require small movement to self soothe e.g. wobble boards/rocking chairs
- Create a sense of community:
  1. Intervene in issues between pupils quickly and teach pupils to do the same
  2. Engage in active listening with pupils and teach them to do the same with each other
  3. Model empathy to pupils on a regular basis